

I am in opposition of the privatization of the Orleans Levee District Lakefront Airport because I have a major problem with the safety issue concerning firefighters. It is my understanding that the current firefighters on staff at the Lakefront Airport are all state civil service employees and if they take on jobs with AAC (the company trying to obtain the Lakefront Airport) they will lose their state civil service benefits and pay. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that none of these men are going to work for this company, and if this is the case where will this company obtain qualified certified firefighters, it's not like the city has unemployed firefighters waiting in line for jobs. I can't believe that a person with the skills and training that these gentlemen obviously have would even consider working for this company so who will we have manning the force? I have several friends who are firefighters for the City of New Orleans and none of them would consider leaving their jobs / benefits as city employees to work for a private company. It would be ludicrous!

Is this airport to remain open 24hrs a day / 7 days a week? Before we jump into this privatization thing, I think we should consider all aspects of the impact this change could make on the entire community. I don't believe that the overall safety of this airport and the community it serves is being considered. If there was a crash of an airplane just off of the airport, would these new firefighters have the skills and training necessary to adequately extinguish an aircraft fire?

Has it been proposed to the State of Louisiana and AAC that the current fire department / firefighters continue as state civil service employees so that they would have protection under state civil service? Because firefighting is such a special skills job, could it be allowed by the state as a special circumstance case?

Thanks for allowing me to express my feelings on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Earl Cheatum